

The Georgia Technology Authority is preparing to upgrade the state's data network to provide agencies with faster, more reliable service and more service options.

The upgrade will replace frame relay technology with multi-protocol label switching (MPLS). More than 2,500 circuits all over Georgia will be upgraded over an 18-month period.

- MPLS offers many advantages over frame relay, including greater reliability and speed. The state's existing network routes almost all data transmissions through a central hub in Atlanta regardless of their origination and termination points. After the conversion to MPLS, the central hub will be eliminated, and data will be sent directly from point to point. MPLS will also make it easier to reroute data transmissions around bottlenecks and broken links.
- Network administrators will be able to assign a different priority, also known as class of service, to network traffic on a case-by-case basis. It means certain transmissions—such as video conferencing or those related to law enforcement and public safety—could take precedence over other transmissions.
- MPLS is an important step toward convergence. It lays a solid foundation for transmitting voice, data and video together on a single network.
- MPLS will make it easier to meet demands for better security. It will also provide greater technical support for teleworkers and wireless services.
- As the state's demand for network capacity increases, MPLS promises to limit future growth in the cost of services because it can be expanded more easily than frame relay.

### ***Six vendors respond to RFP***

GTA received six vendor proposals in response to its Request for Proposal to upgrade the state's network. An evaluation team composed of staff from GTA and other state agencies assessed vendor proposals this spring. The following vendors submitted proposals:

- AT&T Corporation
- BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.
- Clearpath Networks, Inc.
- MCI Worldcom Communications, Inc.
- Qwest Communications Corporation and
- US Carrier Telecom, LLC.

A vendor is expected to be selected this summer. The vendor will be responsible for managing major components of the state's network.

Before circuit upgrades begin, GTA will conduct site surveys at state agencies to verify information about their data circuits. The surveys will help to ensure all circuits are upgraded while minimizing disruptions.

### ***Timeline***

RFP released	February 9, 2004
Vendor responses received	April 20, 2004
Beginning of agency site surveys	Spring 2004
Vendor selected and contract negotiations completed	3rd Quarter 2004
Circuit upgrades begin	3rd Quarter 2004